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ABSTRACT

With the rise in unemployment, the problems many young people face when they enter the labor market have become more acute. Misunderstandings exist about the role of education and training in relation to the problems of young people. Problems of underutilization of manpower cause unemployment and underemployment of young people; this situation in turn has social and economic repercussions. Education and training can help reduce unemployment and promote employment. Many countries have reduced unemployment rates by providing initial skill training and/or apprenticeship beyond compulsory schooling, and work experience programs have improved the chances of low achievers and the socially handicapped. Such efforts should prepare young people for employment within the context of preparation for adult life. Long-term educational plans should provide vocational training to minimize social disparities and ease the transition from education to working life. In addition, schools must lay the foundation for a working life by balancing theory and practice. Finally, it should be noted that school-based and enterprise-based initial skill training, as well as information and counseling, are important to the development of curricula. (BJD)

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THE ROLE OF EDUCATION AND TRAINING IN RELATION TO THE EMPLOYMENT AND UNEMPLOYMENT OF YOUNG PEOPLE

Statement by the Education Committee

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Paris, July 1983

THE ROLE OF EDUCATION AND TRAINING IN RELATION TO THE EMPLOYMENT AND UNEMPLOYMENT OF YOUNG PEOPLE

Statement by the Education Committee

The problems which many young people face when they enter the labour market have become more acute and prominent in recent years with the rise in unemployment. Experience has revealed the limited scope for special job creation measures unless there is a growth of general demand and output. In this situation several OECD countries have expanded education and training opportunities with a view to improving the preparation of young people for working life and helping them face many of their difficulties in the labour market.

Education and training can help young people in many ways, but it is important to be clear about what they can and what they cannot be expected to do in order to avoid unrealistic expectations and demands on them. The labour market problems of young people are also the concern of economic, industrial and manpower policies, and of both governments and employers.

Consequently the Education Committee decided that it was advisable and timely to set out its views about how precisely education and training can help reduce unemployment and promote employment.

The decision to derestrict this report was taken on 7th July, 1983.

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STATEMENT BY THE EDUCATION COMMITTEE

on

THE ROLE OF EDUCATION AND TRAINING IN RELATION TO THE EMPLOYMENT AND UNEMPLOYMENT OF YOUNG PEOPLE

Introduction

The problems which many young people face when they enter the labour market have become more acute and prominent in recent years with the rise in unemployment. Experience has revealed the limited scope for special job creation measures unless there is a growth of general demand and output. In this situation several OECD countries have expanded education and training opportunities with a view to improving the preparation of young people for working life and helping them face many of their difficulties in the labour market.

The Education Committee has noted with satisfaction that vocational education and training have been expanded and improved in many countries in recent years. It also welcomes the importance given to education and training by the manpower and employment services which was underlined by the recent meeting of the Manpower and Social Affairs Committee at Ministerial Level(1). The Committee wishes however to draw attention to the danger of three potential misunderstandings about the role of education and training in relation to the labour market problems of young people.

(i) First, education should not be diverted from the continuing purpose of helping all young people become mature and self-reliant adults able to understand and contribute to the culture in which they live. Preparing them for life at work, important as it is, should be seen as part of this larger responsibility.

(ii) Second, even though education and some training schemes withdraw many young people from the labour force so that they are not counted among the unemployed, unrealistic expectations should not be raised about the ability of education and training to resolve problems which are primarily the responsibility of other fields of policy, notably the creation of jobs through economic and employment policies. Whilst education and training cannot create jobs, the labour market problems of trained people are less than of those who have little or no training.

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(1) Communiqué of the meeting held on 4th and 5th March, 1982, PRESS/A(82)12.

(iii) Third, because the creation of jobs is beyond the scope of education and training systems, these systems and the resources devoted to them, should be judged, not by inappropriate criteria such as the reduction of unemployment, but by their effectiveness in qualifying young people for employment and in giving them the skills needed to contribute to production when they become employed or self-employed.

Consequently the Education Committee considers it opportune to set out its views about the nature of the labour market problems of young people (Part I), and to establish a balanced perspective about the roles of education and training in relation to their current unemployment (Part II) and their future employment (Part III).

I. The problems of young people in the labour market

Young people entering the labour market face many problems. Even during the era of rapid economic growth and high employment many young people found it hard to acquire a good preparation for working life, to choose their vocational education and training and a first job and to settle into a secure and interesting career. In recent years these problems have been made more acute by the difficulty of finding a job.

The young people who face these problems include adolescents who have just left school and young adults who have yet to find secure and satisfying employment. They differ in sex, race and levels of educational attainment, and have widely different interests and needs(1).

The difficulties young people face are part of a wider problem of the underutilisation of manpower which is a feature of the labour market situation in most OECD countries. It is important to make a distinction between the unemployment and the under-employment aspects of the problem because they raise different issues for educational policy.

(i) The most prominent aspect of this underutilisation at present is unemployment. Although the pattern is complex and differs among countries(2), with few exceptions the rate of unemployment tends to be about three times as high among young people as among adults; to be higher the lower the level of education and training; to fall with each year of age; to be higher than average among minority groups, girls and young women, and the children of migrants; and to be higher than average in remote regions and in the inner suburbs of large cities. Whilst the causes are still not clearly understood, the unemployment of young people is largely associated with one or more of three basic factors: the decline in the number of new jobs; the "bulge" in the population of young people, which in most countries is now passing from adolescents to young adults; and their weak competitive position compared with adults whose employment is protected by legislation, collective bargaining and custom.

(ii) Whilst unemployment is a serious and urgent problem, the Education Committee wishes to draw attention to a second aspect of underutilisation which exists at both high and low levels of economic activity and employment: the underemployment of the education and skills of young

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(1) Education and Work: The Views of the Young, OECD, 1983.

(2) Youth Unemployment, the Causes and Consequences, OECD 1980.

people, even though the majority of them has a job. This aspect is less visible because relatively little hard information is available, and special attention should be given to examining the utilisation in employment of education and skills. The content of some jobs has failed to keep pace with the rising levels of education of the labour force; some employers discriminate among different groups of young people in hiring, training and promotion; preparation in schools in the technical and other skills used in working life is still inadequate or incomplete; and many counselling systems fail to provide relevant and effective help. As with unemployment, the burden of underemployment also falls more heavily on young people than others: competition for jobs on the basis of formal credentials has brought many young people to accept jobs hitherto filled by people with lower qualifications, creating a "cascade" effect of displacements in the labour market. Partly for this reason many young people have accepted low-skilled, low-paid jobs, often of short duration, in the secondary labour market. They include young people who are socially disadvantaged, poorly motivated or low-achievers and a few young people who deliberately choose such jobs while waiting to decide their aims in life.

These problems have many social and economic repercussions. They create hardship, distress and demoralisation among the young people who have no jobs or income or who have unsatisfactory ones. They inhibit social mobility among those who find it hard to start in life, and their prolongation could well increase the gap between generations and break up social cohesion. The economy as a whole suffers because current production is lower than it otherwise would have been, and the employed labour force is not renewed with the skills, vigour and enterprise that young people can bring. The reduced number of jobs for young people reduces their opportunities for enterprise-based training, and this in turn reduces the availability of manpower with up-to-date skills.

The solutions to these problems require concerted action in several fields of policy by the public authorities, employers, unions and other non-governmental bodies that share responsibilities for the labour market. It is therefore important to identify the contribution that education and training can make to the overall effort. The main contribution to creating and improving jobs has to come from the economic and employment policies of governments and from the investment, production and personnel policies of enterprises. The experience of brief periods of recovery in some Member countries suggests that higher rates of growth of production would do more than anything else to increase the number of jobs

for young people(1). The main role of education and training in relation to the labour market is the important supporting one of preparing young people for their lives at work, and giving them the skills relevant to current and emerging demands for manpower. To some extent it can also help reduce unemployment, even though that is not its main task.

II. Education and training and the unemployment of young people

In recent years education and training have been able to prevent unemployment reaching even higher levels than it has attained by keeping large numbers of young people out of the labour force after compulsory school. Nevertheless education and training systems must never be used to hold people out of the labour force in a "waiting room" or "parking place": it is essential that the time and resources should genuinely be used for learning.

Before young people enter the labour force a particularly effective use of their time is for complete initial skill training. One of its long term aims is to equip them to avoid unemployment in the future which depends on the quality of training; but it also has a significant immediate impact in keeping participants out of unemployment.

The quantitative effect on current unemployment levels is particularly marked in countries where large numbers of young people continue into initial skill training after compulsory school, whether it is predominantly school based (as in Canada, Sweden and Yugoslavia) or enterprise based (as in Japan and Switzerland) or some combination of the two (as in Australia, Austria, Denmark, France, Germany and the United Kingdom).

(i) To some extent school-based systems can automatically adjust to changes in the size of cohorts of adolescents, especially where enrolment rates at the upper secondary level are high. Access by socially disadvantaged young people to upper secondary education can be encouraged by appropriate financial allowances and by making school more relevant to adult life and more interesting to students.

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(1) See, for example, the "Review of Youth Employment Policies in Germany" in Youth Without Work: Three Countries Approach the Problem, OECD, 1981.

(ii) Because unemployment among young people is low in countries with extensive apprenticeship systems it has been suggested that extending apprenticeship would be an effective way of reducing unemployment. However unemployment is also low in some countries which do not have extensive apprenticeship. Moreover, because the number of apprenticeship places has tended to be related to the level of employment it has been in danger of falling when employment falls. Views differ about whether governments or employers should be responsible for maintaining or increasing apprenticeships. In some countries public subsidies may have helped maintain training places. In others the willingness of employers to maintain the number of training places is governed by the advantages they see of providing their own future supply of trained manpower; the contribution of trainees to production; rates of trainees allowances or wages; and tax relief on training expenditure.

The measures by which several countries have recently sought to provide new entrants to the labour force with relatively short-duration work experience or induction training lasting only a few months have had mixed results(1). In introducing new programmes of education and training care should be taken to ensure that they are carried out by experienced personnel and in such a way that resources are not diverted to short-term solutions away from long term aims. The separate provision of opportunities by different authorities and agencies may perpetuate duplication and gaps in service. The expectation that work experience programmes would reduce unemployment by improving participants' abilities to compete for jobs has not always been realised, and may even have disturbed the labour market. In introducing work experience opportunities important lessons have been learned about the design of curricula and methods for new entrants which could be examined and applied in the reform of school curricula(1). Some of these programmes should be transformed into longer duration opportunities which provide initial skill training as well. Countries which have announced their intention to create one-year training opportunities will need to pay particular attention to their integration into existing longer-duration education and training which leads to accepted or negotiated standards.

Education and training can also influence the ways in which unemployment is shared. Whilst in most countries work experience programmes have had little effect in reducing unemployment among young people as a whole, their main impact has been to improve the chances of low achievers and the socially handicapped compared with other young people, by showing employers that young people who may have left school poorly prepared for working life can nevertheless learn to

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(1) The Future of Vocational Education and Training, OECD, 1983.

work. These programmes need to be converted into full training programmes so that participants are not obliged to take only low-skilled, low-paid jobs in the secondary labour market, and to help them obtain access to further education and training. Special efforts are needed to draw the most socially and educationally handicapped young people into programmes, by making them aware of the available opportunities, by persuading employers and institutions to accept them, and by designing appropriate curricula which will enable them eventually to qualify for entry to skill training.

To the extent that young people have been kept in school, in training or in work experience programmes, current rates of unemployment have been lower than they would otherwise have been. It may also be that the effect of spreading in time the numbers of new entrants to the labour force has also helped reduce unemployment somewhat. It is less certain to what extent keeping more adolescents in education and training has helped reduce aggregate national unemployment at the end of training. Training that is too short or poorly designed or not carried out by appropriately qualified personnel may only defer and intensify participants' difficulties in finding work. In considering this longer term aspect, a distinction has to be drawn between the effects of education and training on individual chances of employment and on the overall national level of unemployment. The evidence that unemployment rates are inversely correlated with levels of educational attainment suggests that longer and higher-level education and training increases the chances of one person getting a job. Since this is part of a process of competition and selection it follows that education and training cannot increase the chances of everyone getting a job if the total number of jobs is fixed. The number of jobs actually available can of course vary according to the balance between the supply of and the demand for skills which education and training can influence. It may be that to some extent a larger supply of trained manpower induces employers to create jobs they would not otherwise have offered, either because the manpower is available or because of the effect on wages. At the very least it seems that a sufficient supply of manpower able to adapt to changes in employment is one essential pre-condition of the creation of new jobs in growing sectors and firms.

It has been suggested that employers are unable to take on more than a given number of school-leavers at one time and that consequently school-leaving should be spread rather than concentrated at one or two moments in the year. The larger cohorts of young people entering the labour force in recent years have been absorbed more slowly than when they were smaller, so that at a given interval after leaving school the numbers looking for a first job have been increasing from year to year. Nevertheless, it is not desirable to allow students to leave before the end of the academic year or term. Many employers have shown a readiness to plan their recruiting in relation to the fixed leaving-dates of school leavers. Early

leaving is unlikely to reduce unemployment significantly. Indeed the difficulties of getting a job are greatest among those who leave school prematurely. It seems recognised by students and parents as well as teachers that it is in the best interest of young people to complete the school year. The main means of reducing "bunching" has in fact been through work experience programmes which have extended education and training rather than shortened it.

III. The role of education and training in preparing young people for employment

Preparing young people for employment is one of the essential tasks of education and training which has to be kept in perspective with the role of preparing them for all aspects of adult life. The need for this is underlined by the finding that many young people think that education could be better related to the real world(1). The Organisation has drawn attention to a convergence taking place between general and vocational education in Member countries(2), which is both desirable and possible because preparation for working life, if properly conceived, has to be part of a liberal education which makes people self-reliant. To this end Member countries have for many years been making extensive reforms to introduce, extend and improve preparation for working life and initial and further skill training. Although these reforms are incomplete in some countries, they reflect permanent aims, whatever the current levels of employment.

Long-term aims

There are three essential long-term aims of education in relation to employment.

(i) One continuing aim is to build up the capacity of the labour force, through extensive opportunities for high quality vocational education and training. The continued development of knowledge and skills will be particularly important in the wider application of new technologies, which are changing the content and organisation of work and making greater demands on many workers to exercise responsibility and judgement; in creating one of the conditions of future economic growth

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(1) Education and Work: The Views of the Young, OECD, 1983.

(2) "Report on Vocational Education and Training", OECD, 1980 (document on general distribution).

and development; and in supporting industrial restructuring. The failure of jobs to keep pace with an increasingly better educated labour force is not an argument for reducing training. Rather there is a need for an increased volume of training to create the infrastructure for renewed economic development and restructuring which will increasingly depend on human skills in developing and utilising technology.

(ii) A second continuing aim of education and training policies is to minimise social disparities which in practice tend to be aggravated by the ways that educational qualifications are used for selection by employers. There is scope for a more equitable distribution of policy attention, opportunities and expenditure among all young people. To some extent progress in this direction is being realised through relative shifts of education and training expenditures from higher education towards more help for adolescents entering the labour force. It could be strengthened by such means as corrective education to prevent the cumulation of educational handicaps, or by credits for further education and training that can be used at any time after compulsory school. There is still a particular need to raise the status of vocational education and training, which remains low in most countries, by such means as opening access to higher education for those with skill qualifications; giving trainees time for general studies; and devising credentials which recognise parity between general and vocational studies.

(iii) A third continuing aim of policy is to ease the transition from education to working life, recognising that working life takes place in a milieu with values, practices and structures different from those of the school(1). This entails making education a genuine and realistic introduction to working life rather than just a stage which precedes it. Since the effective transition from school to working life is intertwined with the process of growing up, and is difficult and complex, considerable attention has to be given to it at all stages of vocational education and training for all pupils. Whilst the disadvantaged need special help there is a danger of confining special measures for preparation for working life to them: that would stigmatise the disadvantaged and deprive others of the help which they also need in making the transition from education to working life.

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(1) Education and Working Life, Report of a Joint Working Party, OECD, 1977.

Preparation in school for working life

The essential aims of preparation in school for working life are to help young people manage their working lives and cope with the range of problems they are likely to encounter. It is not the task of basic education during compulsory schooling to provide specific job skills, but to lay the foundation on which they can be built and to equip all future members of the labour force with the personal and social skills needed to make decisions about the choice of training, type of work or employer, and to engage in individual or collective action.

Efforts to improve basic standards of educational attainment in the early school years are indispensable to creating the conditions under which all students can continue to learn and take subsequent vocational education and training. This includes special corrective or remedial education to prevent poor performers becoming segregated or acquiring persistent handicaps.

Explicit attempts are needed to help all students, without bias of sex, especially in compulsory education, acquire the more important competences that are used in working life in conjunction with technical skills and to do so in ways which will enable them to satisfy their own needs as well as those of their employers. These competences can be put in three main categories.

(i) Abilities and techniques, such as reasoning, reading, writing, calculating and manual dexterity are essential to help young people do their work. It must also be recognised that when young people do not have these basic abilities employers are unwilling to employ them and are often hostile towards them.

(ii) Personal and social skills are needed to give them the ability to communicate and work with others in safety.

(iii) Knowledge about working life is essential to help them manage their own lives at work; take part in individual or collective negotiations; and look for and choose training or a job if they should become unemployed(1).

Whilst some additions to the curriculum are needed, the main need is to bring about a change in methods and in the balance between theory and practice which will help young people acquire knowledge in order to use it as well as for its own sake.

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(1) "The Competences Used in Working Life", OECD, 1982 (on general distribution).

Instruction about the world of work is needed, especially in the later years of compulsory education, to help pupils begin to acquire an understanding of the environment in which they will spend a major part of their life. This is also an essential background to counselling. It includes in several countries opportunities, integrated into the curriculum, for work observation or work exploration in enterprises. They should be available to students in all types of schools, and not be confined to low achievers.

A teaching force with greater knowledge and understanding of the labour market in other fields than education can be formed by giving teachers work experience during initial and in-service training and creating working links between teachers and workers in enterprises. The present weak labour market limits, but does not exclude, the use of recruitment and turnover to employ teachers with experience outside education. The continued recruitment of young qualified teachers is an indispensable means of maintaining a balanced age distribution of the teaching labour force.

Initial skill training

In some Member countries school-based and enterprise-based initial skill training are each moving towards a different balance between theoretical instruction and work practice.

(i) The provision of initial skill training in upper secondary schools in some countries is helping raise the status of vocational education and training towards parity with general studies. Whilst pedagogical standards are often high, the technical quality of the training could be improved if there were more opportunities for work practice in enterprises.

(ii) The quality and relevance of enterprise-based training is high when it is closely related to the production methods and technologies used by firms, and to their markets and organisation of work, and carefully designed and supervised by governments, employers and unions working together. Employers often prefer young people trained in this way for their practical knowledge of the disciplines of working life. Such training needs to be closely co-ordinated with complementary part-time instruction in institutions because theoretical instruction is an important, and potentially growing, element of good training. It is desirable for enterprise-based training to be fairly broad and not merely related to the specific needs of the firm. There is a risk that possibilities for broad training and practical experience in firms may be endangered by trends towards a simplification of some kinds of work.

Experience in a few countries points to the value of arrangements that combine, in a sufficiently long period of training, theoretical instruction and practical training through part-time attendance at a training institution and part-time employment: they can give young people an income and a practical introduction to working life; provide high quality skill training and a base for acquiring further skills; and help reduce unemployment in the future as well as currently. In relating the theoretical and the practical components of this training the aim should be to construct a dialectic process by which each reinforces the other(1). Such developments can help reduce the disadvantage of young people who are obliged to leave full-time school fairly early. However opportunities for combined part-time employment and part-time training depend to a large extent on raising levels of employment for new entrants to the labour force.

The development of effective links between training and future employment depends on finding practical ways of helping young people become mobile enough among different work tasks and enterprises to be able to take advantage of changing employment opportunities and establish themselves in the primary labour market. It is essential to help young people acquire security in the labour market by being able to change jobs and to avoid training them specifically for jobs which may not exist in the future. There is growing experience in doing this by grouping training into fewer, larger categories; providing broad-based off-the-job training in the first year; preparing people for common, generic or transferable skills used in several different types of work; extending the use of modular curricula; and giving greater prominence to the personal skills that enable workers to transform their jobs and adapt their technical skills to different situations. Nevertheless some practical problems remain to be solved in the application of these various approaches.

There is a need to extend and diversify initial skill training to adolescents who at present have little or no access to it. Five groups need special attention:

(i) those who have left compulsory school with learning disabilities or handicaps or no formal qualification, and have gone into jobs that offer no training and who have begun to establish broken histories of frequent periods of employment, unemployment and time out of the labour force;

(ii) new entrants to the labour force who have had only short-duration opportunities for induction into working life;

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(1) The Future of Vocational Education and Training, OECD, 1983.

(iii) those who have left the upper-secondary school having studied only general subjects;

(iv) girls, who still have only limited opportunities to train for traditional male occupations; and

(v) the children of foreign workers, who are often prevented by cultural and linguistic barriers from having full access to counselling, education and training.

Initial and further skill training opportunities could be extended to young adults whose needs have not been sufficiently met under pressures in recent years to provide for the increased numbers of adolescents. Moreover, the population "bulge" has already moved in some countries from the adolescents to young adults over 20. Further training opportunities could be more widely available to help young adults, when they have completed initial skill training, continue developing their knowledge and skill and adapting them to rapid changes in patterns of employment. This could well be a significant condition of the development of innovation. The adaptation of training curricula to specific new developments in technology is best done after initial skill training at the level of further training(1).

Greater attention could be given to providing training for managers of small firms and training to help young people start their own firms. Evidence from the United Kingdom and the United States indicates that young people under 25 are responsible for a significant proportion of new business starts, and this may be a promising source of new jobs in new sectors of the economy, but the survival of new firms depends on appropriate managerial training.

Information and Counselling

The role of information is being made increasingly important by uncertainties in the labour market as well as by the trend towards longer vocational education and training. Information and counselling are too important to be given by specialised counsellors alone: all teachers should have some knowledge and understanding of the world of work and some counselling skills. They should have a place in curricula in schools and training institutions, starting in compulsory education, and continuing into further training; should be given in enterprises; and should be available to parents. Information and counselling services could become more effective mechanisms for linking education and training to employment. They could help each individual identify and obtain access to an appropriate sequence of education, training

(1) The Future of Vocational Education and Training, OECD, 1983.

and employment opportunities. To this end there is a special need to help individuals select relevant information from the vast amounts of data now available. Counselling services should make special efforts to reach disadvantaged young people, such as the handicapped, girls and ethnic minorities. Services could also help employers become better informed about the skills, abilities and aims of young people. The various services for delivering information and counselling could be more efficiently managed to make better use of their resources of information, finance and counselling personnel.

Policy options in providing education and training for new entrants to the labour force

The consensus among OECD countries that vocational education and training should be more widely available is expressed in at least two different ways.

(i) Some countries have made a political commitment that government will provide all young people with employment, education or training. Some of them have expressed this commitment as a guarantee (e.g. Norway and Sweden). In practice the implementation of this guarantee has mainly entailed creating additional education and training opportunities, primarily of fairly short duration for induction to the labour market. In practice the guarantee has been formulated in precise ways which have contained the costs, such as by defining the age range of the young people concerned, or the time when it will apply.

(ii) Other countries have maintained their existing policies, providing extensive education and training opportunities without an explicit political commitment by governments, and maintaining income support for those in need. (e.g. Austria, Belgium, Canada, Ireland, Switzerland and the United States.)

Other countries, such as the United Kingdom, whilst holding the view that interventions in the labour market should be minimised and that employers share the responsibility for training, have nevertheless recognised the need for special public programmes to complement existing ones for new entrants to the labour force, especially those who are unemployed. These programmes can include guaranteed offers of training to groups most in need.

In Germany there is a consensus among the government and employers that every young person who wishes and is able to undergo training should have the opportunity. Given the important role of the dual system of training it is the responsibility of employers to provide training places in firms and of the state to provide complementary training in vocational schools.

A guarantee and other alternatives have some common elements in that both rest on the arguments that if the community expects all young people to work it must equip them to do so; that training is a right; and that it is better for society and the young people themselves if they are active rather than idle.

Yet there are also significant differences between these policies.

(i) A guarantee entails the assumption of responsibility for all young people by governments, and so reflects the degree of political priority that the community is willing to give to young people. Alternative policies rest on the argument that public interventions in the labour market (widely conceived to include education and training) should be minimised; and in some countries it is the view that employers should have a responsibility, if not the prime responsibility, for providing training.

(ii) A second major difference concerns access to jobs. One argument is that the entry of young people into working life is so important to them, the community and the economy that jobs should be guaranteed. The counter-argument is that governments cannot guarantee jobs in a free labour market, especially under present economic conditions; and that guaranteed jobs would risk being low-level, low paid ones. Instead education and training can help young people compete for the available jobs and confer on them skills needed in the creation of new jobs.

Such considerations have led some countries to provide initial skill training for a large proportion of young people.

Whether or not there is a political guarantee of education and training, and whether it is provided by governments or firms, the incentives to young people to take up education and training opportunities could be strengthened. Governments cannot alter the small differences in wages which lead many young people to prefer unskilled work now to training for skilled work later; but could strengthen two kinds of inducements. One is to make education and training more relevant and attractive, because there is evidence that many young people find education and training unrelated to the real world(1). The other inducements concern allowances. The

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(1) Education and Work: The Views of the Young, OECD, 1983.

structure of education, training and unemployment allowances is complex, confusing and sometimes contradictory, and could be simplified. There is also scope for education and training allowances being of longer duration than unemployment benefits; and the Education Committee welcomes the interest shown in the communiqué of the 1982 Meeting of the OECD Manpower and Social Affairs Committee at Ministerial Level in the possibilities of partly using unemployment compensation funds for training for the unemployed or to support trainees.